

### **Notes from conversation with Hans J. Barschel - November 1993**

---

HJB - You know that he was 103 years old when he died, and he lived most of his life with one eye.

EKM - Yes, that was amazing.

HJB- It happened very early in his lifetime, he was playing around, kids you know, and somebody poked out his eye. It didn't disturb him at all. And when you met him you just tried to find out which was the right eye.

He had the A-D Gallery. I had an exhibit in early spring of 1946. This was an exhibit after the war ended with Gergely and me. Gergely was a Hungarian refugee, very humorous, very recitive. You see inside (the exhibit announcement) - you can see he was very talented.

He had a secretary, which was a ?? and there was a very loyal relationship. She was rather important. She did nice public relations and people liked her. Her name was Hortense Wendell. During one summer, I was still in NY, I was in NY from 1937 - 1952. She went away on vacation and came back to her apartment and just dropped dead. They found out later, through an autopsy that it was her heart.

I was a student in Berlin of George Salter. His brother Stephan returned to NY from California where he had been working. We became friends and eventually lived together in an apartment in NY with another artist. And Stephan was actually a book designer. George Salter was an illustrator. And Stephan took me to the A-D gallery to an opening and introduced me there. I had my German portfolio. I showed him (Leslie) the work I had done at that time and it was true that Leslie, as soon as he found somebody with some talent he would take the telephone and call all sorts of art directors. He was, he knew everybody. they were helpful, he was helpful. it was one big family.

---

He used to call it the 'creative forties and fifties'. Eventually, I had a tremendous amount of production during the forties and fifties.

And in 1946 this exhibit was with all sorts of new type of work - atomic energy and so on. And was very interesting.

I was engaged at this time, I married in 48. My late wife didn't dare come to the opening because she knew from other experiences (George Groz and so on) that it was an alcohol affair, handshakes with a drink and so on.

So she had ordered a nice bouquet delivered on time at the A-D gallery. You have no idea how crowded it was, you could invite everybody and everybody came. There was also a gentleman whom I had contacted through Dr. Leslie. He was at the time, he was top man of the Sheridan House Publishing. I got many assignments from him. And suddenly among all these people, it was almost like the NY subway during rush hour. Nobody could get into the door anymore, you had to lean against the pillar and push them in. This gentleman from the Sheridan House reintroduced himself as the Art Director of Standard Oil. And he asked me to see him the next day in the Rockefeller Plaza where they had their headquarters. And I went there and he had a tremendous assignment for me, which was also connected with Leslie. I was to design a book, a guidance book for all the employees of Standard Oil to explain what atomic energy was. There was nothing, not even Life magazine had anything on this. Nobody knew anything on this. So I made my rounds to all sorts of people. I got more information than the US Government could stand. It was unbelievable. I had finished the project and you can see all this work in the archives. When it was all finished I took it to our vacation place where we spent the summers. And the last trip

---

in was to Standard Oil and the bill was \$7000. At this time it was a fortune, and the end result was that the US Government, some sort of agency did not permit it to be printed. Standard still had to pay the bill. There was so much information, as I explained the splitting of the atom and everything, which nobody knew about at this time. Anyway I got my nice prospective in the archives.

All this came through Leslie's connection.

EKM - The way that the connections you made through him, was that the same for all of the other artists too?

HJB - Yes - maybe different connections, but connections.

EKM - It seems like the A-D Gallery was very social - occasions for social gathering- where you could meet other artists and make connections.

HJB - Oh sure, I met quite a few - Giusti and other people, Burtin and Bernhard at this time. And there were some others. Once I was with the RIT in the fifties there was another exhibit I participated in there. I came down from Rochester to NY and attended the opening of this exhibit.

EKM - Do you know when the last exhibits were - because at some point he changed - they changed from the A-D Gallery to Gallery 303. I guess that was in the sixties.

HJB - Right - from A-D Gallery - Gallery 303, of course it was the room. Room 303 in this building. in which there was the Composing Room, Inc.

EKM - The phrase the 'creative forties' that Dr. Leslie coined - was that just because he had so many people...

HJB - No it was actually what we all did. There was a new kind of atmosphere.

---

EKM - It seems like there was - partly because of people coming over from Europe - a strong concentration of creative people...

HJB - there were about five or six of us - myself, Will Burtin, the swiss guy - about 5 or 6 of us. We got to Uncle Bob away from Uncle Adolf.

EKM - I wouldn't exactly call him Uncle.

HJB - Here's a story you will appreciate. About one of the granddaughters of Wagner. They all were very much involved with Hitler because of the germanic mythology and so on. She was forced to call Hitler, Uncle Adolph. I met her in NY and she was in ?? temporarily. And she told me this story in NY. She is back in Germany and quite instrumental in reviving the Wagnerian operas. She was very far removed from the Nazi's.

EKM - You did a lot of poster work in Germany - did you find there weren't as many posters here there were magazine covers instead...

HJB - Not this type of work - I really started with an avalanche of bookjackets. I did mystery books and there could be?? and then I did a great year of pharmaceutical ads - pushing drugs to doctors. I was art director of the new public health publication of the health department of New York for two years. And then I accepted a job here in Rochester for the ?? Press corp as a public relations person. They thought I would bring them a lot of new assignments - great leads - I told them this was not the case. First of all there are now printers in NY who have art departments - if the Rochester company contacted freelance artists - this was my connection too - I was doing quite a few covers for Ciba Symposium and the Art Director of Ciba became the Director of Public Health Service publication and asked me to join him. This is the way it always goes - connections.